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## A STONE STATUE OF KWANYIN

There is no deity in the Buddhist pantheon better known to occidental people than Kwanyin. We are familiar with it under various names. The Japanese, for instance, call it Kwannon, and in India it is known as Avalôkitês'vara. In the latter country, which is the original source of Buddhism, this deity is represented as a youth approaching manhood; but when the Buddhist priests found their way to China they discovered there a local female deity named Kwanyin. The similarity in the attributes of these two deities led the priests to adopt Kwanyin as an incarnation of Avalôkitês'vara, although they retained the Chinese name. Thus this god is represented with the feminine characteristics of the Chinese goddess and often with the budding mustache of its Indian prototype. The attempt of a sculptor to blend the attributes of a graceful, feminine Chinese goddess and the youthful, vigorous Indian god has produced the statue which is illustrated here.

This little stone figure, the gift of a generous patron of the Museum, although but 36 inches high, reminds us of the large statue of Kwanyin lately acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bejewelled and otherwise adorned, it stands for the finest phase of Buddhist art, that golden age which began with the seventh century A. D., and for a short time sounded the dominant note of Buddhist art in the Eastern world.

It has been said that the Chinese have no sculpture; that it is more like carving than anything we know by the higher name. Is there anything wanting in the dignity of this figure, in the grandeur of conception, in the sculptural effect, in the proportion, or in the adornments which so closely resemble the real? Here we have something concrete, and not merely a strange expression of foreign religious thought. We readily associate tenderness, compassion and mercy with this beautiful god.

Rather than lamenting the left hand which is gone, let us look at the softness of the brow where the hair is artfully caught back under the headpiece, at the fulness of the cheek and neck, and the gracefully draped ropes of jewels. Is it not beautiful! Not yet have the folds of the drapery become entirely differentiated from the body, as is the case a little later, in the tenth century; but there is a graceful emphasis to the curves, and the poise of the body within its draperies is splendid! M.



Chinese Stone Statue of Kwan Yin, T'ang Dynasty